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Pentagon Investigators Looking Into Disclosure

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 18 — Secretary of Defense Casper W. Weinberger has ordered the Pentagon's own investigative arm to determine how a letter he wrote to President Reagan urging a firm stand in arms negotiations at Geneva found its way into the press.

A spokesman, Robert B. Sims, said Mr. Weinberger had instructed his staff to begin looking into the disclosure as soon as he read about it in The New York Times and The Washington Post on Saturday.

Mr. Sims said the Defense Investigative Service, which is part of the Pentagon, was brought into the investigation today. If the inquiry leads outside the Defense Department, Mr. Sims said, it would be turned over to the Justice Department as defense investigators have no authority outside the Pentagon.

Letter Was Sent on Nov. 13

Pentagon officials said that Mr. Weinberger's letter to President Reagan was sent Nov. 13, with copies to Secretary of State George P. Shultz; to Donald T. Regan, White House chief of staff; Robert C. McFarlane, national security adviser; William J. Casey, Director of central Intelligence, and Kenneth L. Adelman, head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Mr. Sims said Sunday that he presumed those officials had shared the letter with others in their agencies.

The letter accompanied a report to the President on purported Soviet violations of arms pacts, including the 1972 strategic arms treaty and the anti-ballistic missile treaty of the same year, and urged him to adopt a tough posture during his meetings with Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the Soviet leader.

Pentagon officials said Mr. Weinberger had been irritated even earlier when he saw accounts of his views on the purported violations, attributed to Defense Department officials, in The Washington Post and in The New York Times last week.

For that reason, a Pentagon official said today, fewer than a dozen copies of the letter were circulated in the Pentagon. Moreover, the official said, Mr. Weinberger took pains to instruct those who had seen the letter not to discuss it outside a small circle.

Pentagon officials noted that the let-

ter whose text appeared in The New York Times on Saturday had been signed "Cap," Mr. Weinberger's nickname. They said none of the copies circulated in the Pentagon had been signed.

The implication was that the disclosure had come from another department in an effort to discredit Mr. Weinberger.

Mr. Weinberger's letter and an unclassified 11-page digest of the report were provided to The New York Times by a source, who asked not be identified, in response to a Times reporter's request. The materials were not officially released and have since become the object of dispute at the Geneva summit meeting.

After the letter became public, Pentagon officials said, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Fred C. Iklé, and the Assistant Secretary for International Security Policy, Richard N. Perle, recommended what one official called "a thorough, professional investigation."

Although Pentagon officials were pointing the finger away from the Defense Department, one said that if it was discovered that the disclosure had come from within the Pentagon, "we will fire the guy."